



July 30, 2012

Jonathan Dahl
Editor in Chief
SmartMoney.com
1211 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Subject: "10 Things Pet Stores Won't Say" (July 2, 2012, SmartMoney.com)

Dear Mr. Dahl,

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) shares your interest in consumer awareness for companion animals as expressed in the recent article "10 Things Pet Stores Won't Say" on *SmartMoney.com*. For example, the importance of competitive pricing among retailers, emphasizing the role of veterinarians as resources on appropriate care, and the dangers of purchasing a pet from any source on impulse are excellent pieces of advice for consumers.

We would, however, like to point out several misconceptions from the article in fairness to pet stores across the United States which provide healthy pets and recognize the importance of helping families choose the best companion for their lifestyle.

Pet adoptions and retail pet sales are not mutually exclusive.

It is not necessary to disfavor retail pet sales in order to favor pet adoptions. Consumers have a right to consider multiple options—including pet stores, private breeders, adoption centers, and rescue organizations—when finding the right companion animal for their lifestyle. This is important because finding a pet compatible to ones' lifestyle helps animals find a loving home and receive quality care. Limiting consumers' options by disfavoring retail pet stores as a potential source for a pet is a disservice to both the animals and prospective pet owners.

Pet stores provide healthy, well socialized animals.

Breeders and retailers provide healthy, well socialized pets to the public. The preeminent study by Cornell University on the health of puppies from various sources demonstrates that, on average, pet store puppies are as healthy as those from any other source, and often healthier. In fact, the largest provider of animal health insurance—VPI Pet Insurance—recently lowered premiums for pet store puppies because the puppies receive more veterinary attention during their first 12 weeks compared to puppies from other sources, and as a result, have fewer claims.

Most breeders and pet stores are diligent, caring and responsible.

Suggesting the practices of substandard facilities are widely used throughout the pet trade creates a false impression that the prevailing standards are inadequate. In fact, it is the failure of substandard facilities to meet specified standards that creates problems. The focus for those who sincerely care about animal welfare should be on maintaining appropriate standards of care, rather than demonizing the pet trade.

PIJAC supports rehoming animals wherever possible and encourages consumers to include shelters and rescues as an option when searching for a companion animal. PIJAC also works to raise the standard of care for animals in the pet industry. These efforts will not cease.

Sincerely,

Mike Canning
President & CEO
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council

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